



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 463/2026

***Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Sunday of the Parable of the Sower
Dedicated to Sunday School Teachers and Religious Educators***

October 11, 2026

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

***... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edification of the Body of Christ.
(Ephesians 4:12)***

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At our last Clergy-Laity Congress in Cleveland, we received a wonderful harvest from our Department of Religious Education – the new K-12 curriculum that was commissioned at the 2024 Clergy-Laity in San Diego. This was a direct result of the sowing of seeds and labors of love to sustain the ongoing mission: *... to support clergy, religious educators, parishes, parents, and young people with catechetical materials that are faithful to the Orthodox tradition, accessible to today's learners, and engaging for the life of the Church.*

On this Sunday of the Sower, which the Holy Eparchial Synod has designated as a day of recognition for all our dedicated and faithful Sunday School Teachers and Religious Educators, let us celebrate and give special encouragement to all those who are giving of themselves *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edification of the Body*

of Christ. In a world where we live with constant information overload and the dawn of artificial intelligence is challenging many of our basic assumptions about learning and knowledge, we are blessed to have so many devoted souls who are leading the way in keeping the traditions of our Church, handing them over from person to person all across our Sacred Archdiocese.

Once again, this Sunday coincides with the Sunday of the 350 Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, the culminating theological exposition of the truth of the Incarnation, memorialized by the very possibility of an icon of God the Son. The teachings of our Holy Orthodox Church delve into the most profound meanings of what it is to be human and how our human nature is transformed and sanctified by God. Those who strive to teach these mystical realities in our Churches are to be thanked and upheld in every way, for they are building up the Church with the “living stones” of our many members (I Peter 2:5).

Therefore, Sisters and Brothers, let us take this Sunday to honor those who cheerfully, humbly, and willingly follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was, in all things, the consummate Teacher.

With paternal blessings in the Lord Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "+ELPIDOPHOROS" in Greek script.

+ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America